



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 21, 2008

CONTACT: KELLY M. BROCKMAN
OR SHANNON ASHFORD
615.741.6007 (OFFICE)

THE TENNESSEE DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS WARNS CONSUMERS OF FOREIGN LOTTERY AND FAKE CHECK SCAMS

Nashville, TN- The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs warns consumers to be aware of foreign lottery and fake check scams. Scams like these take place everyday and the goal is to get your money or personal information.

Consumers may receive notification via telephone, email or direct mail letting them know that they have won foreign lotteries from Canada and as far away as Europe. Consumers who receive email notifications are asked to respond with personal information in order to receive the winnings. The scammers take that information and the consumer never gets any lottery money.

Consumers also receive notification letters in the mail. With some scams, they ask the recipient to wire money for fees to a third party before they can receive a check.

With other scams, those consumers who receive lottery notification letters in the mail also find a check enclosed. The consumer is notified that they have won and are then asked to cash the check and wire or mail a portion of the non-existent winnings to cover insurance and fees. A contact name and phone number may even be provided to assist with verification and processing. The checks look legitimate and many consumers will take them to the bank and cash them, not knowing they are counterfeit. Before the check clears, they use money already in their account to wire the fees back to the third party. However, once the check does not clear the bank, the consumer soon realizes they are responsible for the money.

According to their website, the United States Postal Inspector Service and their global law enforcement partners have seized over 600,000 fake checks.

The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs offers these words of caution for consumers who are thinking about responding to a foreign lottery notification:

- Ignore all mail, email and phone solicitations for foreign lottery promotions.
- Federal law prohibits mailing lottery tickets, advertisements or payments to purchase tickets in a foreign lottery.
- Don't give out your personal information including account numbers during an unsolicited sales pitch.
- If you purchase one foreign lottery ticket, your name may be placed on a "suckers list" that fraudulent telemarketers buy and sell.

DAVY CROCKETT TOWER, 5TH FLOOR
500 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TN 37243
615.741.2241

CONTINUED- THE TENNESSEE DIVISION OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS WARNS CONSUMERS OF FOREIGN LOTTERY AND FAKE CHECK SCAMS

- Always use caution corresponding with businesses in other countries because it may be difficult to locate them if a problem arises.
- There is no legitimate reason why someone would give you a check or money order and ask you to wire or send money in return.
- No legitimate contest will make you pay a fee to collect a prize.
- To win any lottery, you must first buy a ticket. You can't win a contest you didn't enter.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

If you decide to play a foreign lottery, you won't win anything but you may lose everything.

For more information or to report a fraud, please contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-342-8385 or www.tennessee.gov/consumer. You can also find more information from the U.S. Postal Inspector and its partners at www.fakechecks.org.

#